

# INNIS HERALD

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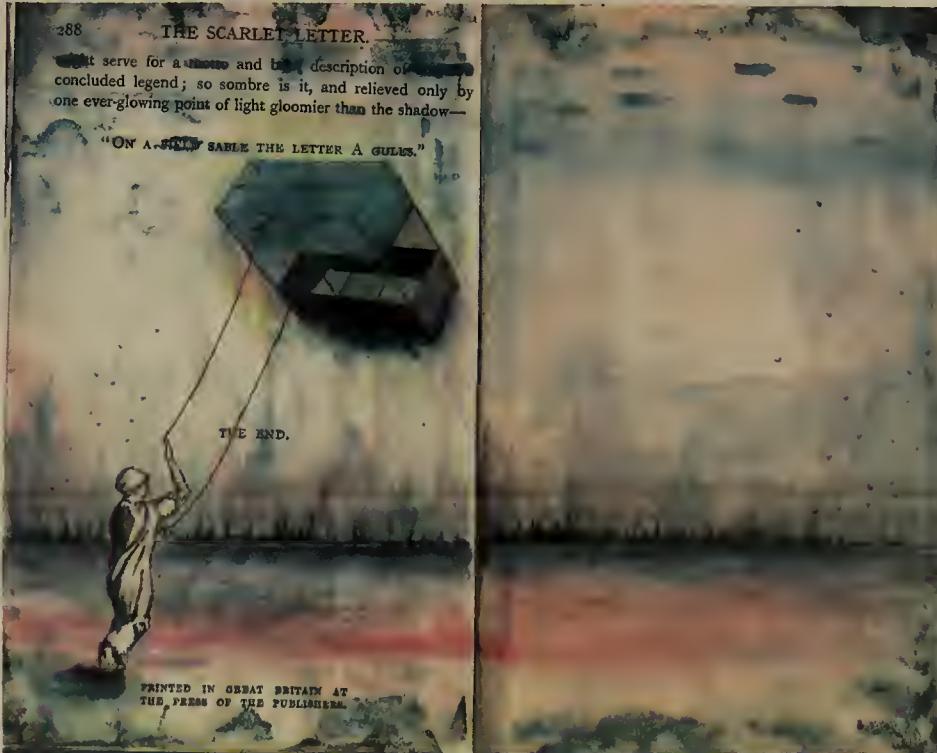
## THE SCARLET LETTER.

It serve for a ~~photo~~ and brief description of the concluded legend; so sombre is it, and relieved only by one ever-glowing point of light gloomier than the shadow—

"ON A ~~FIELD~~ SABLE THE LETTER A GULES."

THE END.

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— MASTHEAD —

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— PRÉCIS —

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— NOTES —

*The artwork featured on the cover and pages 7 and 9 comes courtesy of Felix Kalmenson. The pieces are titled On a Field Sable, Between Burlap Covers and Cabot Calling, respectively.*

*We are now comfortably located in our new office, room 107, just past the Innis Café (currently under reconstruction). Our office hours are located on our website.*

*The Innis Herald is published during the second full week of each month during the Fall and Winter terms. Meeting dates and deadlines may be found on our website.*

*All submissions are welcome.*

## 10 Pick Up Lines

**PICKING** up women is hard, but with any luck, so is your boner. According to Darwinian theory, women are more inclined to choose men capable of achieving erections over those who are incapable of doing so - a primitive sub-conscious impulse designed to propagate the species. In order to successfully pick up women, you must advertise the fact that you can maintain an erection, and you must advertise it loudly. Consider, for example, the following ten pick-up lines.

10. You must be from Jamaica, because you're Jamaican me horny.
9. I've got a boner with your name written all over it.
8. Excuse me, I couldn't help but notice that the space inside your mouth is currently unoccupied. Coincidentally, I also happen to have a boner.
7. I'd like you to meet Cocksaurus Rex. He ain't gonna feed himself.
6. Congratulations, you're now in the Guinness Book of World Records for inspiring the creation of the world's largest freestanding structure: my boner.

**WHEN** someone asked me to list a few pickup lines for a woman to use, I realized I couldn't think of any. That is because we women don't need pickup lines. All we need to do is bat our eyelashes, wear v-necklines that show ample cleavage to and they are good as ours. When it comes to men, our intentions need to be spelled out for them most of the time, if not all the time. The following are ten original pickup lines that get right to the point and will make any guy, without a doubt, sweat for you.

10. I had a dream last night and you were in it, care to find out how it ended?
9. I'm told I'm a good cook, what do you think of my hot buns?
8. How about we play a game of CSI, I'll be the forensic scientist and you be the stiff.
7. There is this rumour going around that you are the

**MELISSA LASZKIEWICZ**

## I Call The Big One Bitey: The Top Ten Simpsons Episodes

**EVERY** Sunday night, I turn on the TV hoping for a *Simpsons* re-run. Something from 1992, maybe, or 93 - a time when the characters had depth, the plot lines were coherent, and the postmodern gags were witty. The continuing popularity of *The Simpsons* is baffling: as its quality declines, its ubiquity only seems to increase. Episodes in recent seasons have garnered fewer laughs than *The Boring World of Neil's Bob*. (Oh, how I miss such clever quips.) Somehow, the show's increased crassulence hasn't prevented the creation of a well-received feature film, consistent ratings for Season 19 and copious amounts of official and unofficial merchandise (if you don't own a *Simpsons* poster, book, Pez dispenser, bobblehead, keychain, or home pregnancy test, you've probably never watched the show). Without further a-D'Oh!, here are the top 10 *Simpsons* episodes of all time.

10. Behind the Laughter (Season 11)

Synopsis: A fake documentary about the *Simpsons*' rise to stardom and private struggles a la VH1's *Behind the Music*.

Narrator's voiceover: Somehow, Homer became addicted to painkillers (as we see doctors pouring them down his throat)

Homer: I want to set the record straight. I thought... the police officer... was a prostitute (nodding).

Narrator's voiceover: For America's favourite family, everything was coming up roses. But those roses contained ready-to-sting bees.

Why it's in the Top 10: this one's a rare gem in the later

5. I have a boner, you have a mouth. Finish the equation.
4. I'm not too big on camping, however I am pitching a big tent right now (i.e. my boner).
3. I've got a big fucking boner!
2. Hopefully the sheer size of my boner will compensate for the fact that it is currently covered in smegma.
1. I want you to squeal like a pig!

Although the number one pick-up line does not mention boners, it nevertheless - for reasons which science cannot adequately explain - remains the most effective pick up line known to man. For proof of its effectiveness, take a look at the ease with which the hillbillies in the film *Deliverance* use it for the purpose of seduction. If it can work for inbred mountain-folk, there is no reason why it can't work for you too (who is presumably not inbred). ■

**DAVID HUMPHREYS**

best kisser, care to prove this?

6. My friend and I are having a debate whether my left boob is bigger than my right, what do you think?

5. My fortune cookie told me I'd be in for a pleasant surprise. Looking at you, it appears to be coming true

4. Do you look that good naked as you do in your clothes?

3. Did you accidentally spill your drink on me because I feel all wet

2. My dildo appears to be broken, can I borrow your toy?

1. I'm saving myself for the right person, you look like you will do. ■

## 2007's 12 Best Albums



**Derek Bailey**  
*Standards*  
[Tzadik]

While the loss of avant-garde guitarist Derek Bailey on Christmas of 2005 was great, the fairly regular stream of unreleased material seeing the light of day since then has provided sufficient consolation and *Standards* is no exception. As the name implies, in this recording session Bailey applies his generally discontinuous, experimental style to the very opposite form: standards. While Bailey fans will notice that this is not a new twist - the same practice was employed on 2002's incredible *Ballads* - the album is not a mere reiteration. Recorded in advance of the *Ballads* material, this release presents Bailey's first working through of the concept and, expectedly, the results fall between *Ballads* and his characteristic sound. While melody is as present as can be expected, it is far less emphasized in these takes: the standards slowly reveal themselves amidst a more abstract context, creating a dynamic that makes the album just as worthwhile for longtime fans as it provides a great entry point for new listeners. « *When Your Liver Is Gone* », an album highlight, playfully suggests this juxtaposition in its very title, while « *Don't Tell About Me* » best represents the effectiveness of the transition from Bailey's belligerently percussive, precise strokes to the playfully lyrical, the evanescence of this composite concept signalled in its fittingly abrupt last note.



**James Blackshaw**  
*The Cloud of Unknowing*  
[Tompkins Square]

As with Bailey, the music world lost a great in the recent past when John Fahey died in 2001. Unlike Bailey, the internet has not seen a plethora of unreleased recordings for Fahey, but rather a significant number of followers. Although drawing more from Robbie Basho, a member of Fahey's

Simpsons seasons. The spot-on parody of VH1's hit show and the Hollywood lifestyle it dramatizes combined with judiciously selected scenes from classic episodes revitalizes the usually-arduous *clip show* genre. Unlike most *clip shows*, which rely primarily upon the old laughs, this one runs on new material. The true greatness of this episode, to risk sounding pretentious, probably comes from its meta-ness. Never has so much self-reference been crammed into a half-hour program, yet it comes off as fresh and creative instead of seeming like the writers ran out of ideas. Unfortunately, the following seasons seemed to indicate the latter.

#### 9. Homer vs. the 18th Amendment (Season 8)

**Synopsis:** Prohibition comes to Springfield after a particularly debaucherous St. Patrick's Day. Moe disguises his tavern as a pet shop, and Homer supplies the bootlegged Duff beer in bowling balls. Chief Wiggum's inability to capture the *Beer Baron* causes him to lose his job to Rex Banner. When Homer runs out of beer and his homemade liquor scheme fails, he lets Chief Wiggum turn him in and get his job back. Homer escapes the punishment of death by catapult when the town clerk discovers that the law was repealed.

**Bart:** Aw rats, another gutter ball. Gee Homer, you sure do suck tonight.

**Homer:** Yeah, suck like a fox!

**Homer:** To alcohol! The cause of, and solution to, all of life's problems.

Why it's in the Top 10: you don't need to have seen *The Untouchables* to laugh at the straight-laced, humorless character of Rex Banner, who dresses and talks like a 1920s detective. What's really fun about this episode, though, is that we get to see Homer's smart side, which in turn points to the stupid side of the law.

#### 8. Marge vs. the Monorail (Season 4)

**Synopsis:** Mr. Burns is fined 3 million dollars for dumping nuclear waste, and the town gets to decide how to spend the money. A man named Lyle Lanley bursts in on the town meeting and convinces Springfield's citizens to construct a monorail. As Homer excitedly prepares to be a monorail conductor, Marge's investigations into Lanley's legitimacy reveal the whole plan to be a dangerous scam. When the monorail careens out of control on its maiden voyage, Homer saves the day.

(Marge discovers a possum family in the closet) Homer: I call the big one "Bitey."

Leonard Nimoy: My job here is done.

Barney: What do you mean? You didn't do anything.

Nimoy: Didn't I? (beamed up)

Why it's in the Top 10: so many reasons. A cogent yet zany plotline, brilliant throw-away gags, the monorail theme song and the random Leonard Nimoy guest appearance make it an unforgettable episode.

#### 7. Burns' Heir (Season 5)

**Synopsis:** A brush with death leads Mr. Burns to ponder his legacy. He decides to choose a male heir on the basis of open auditions. Mr. Burns is unimpressed by Springfield's youth and finds himself unable to select a winner. Bart makes a fool of himself because of Homer's poorly-written audition script, then vandalizes Mr. Burns' house as revenge for his rejection. As Burns watches Bart destroying his property, he immediately decides that Bart

has what it takes to be his heir. Bart is initially pleased by Mr. Burns' generosity, but then grows lonely and asks to return to his family. Mr. Burns hires actors to trick Bart into believing that his family is happier without him. Convinced that Mr. Burns has brainwashed Bart, the Simpsons hire a *deprogrammer* to win him back, but a misunderstanding leads Hans Moleman to be programmed as their son. Meanwhile, Burns decides to test Bart's loyalty by ordering him to fire Homer from his job at the powerplant. Bart fires Mr. Burns instead and things return to normal at the Simpson household.

**Bart** (reading Homer's cue card): Hello Mr... Burns. I bad want money now. Me sick.

**Homer:** Ooh, he card read good!

**Actor playing Homer:** I'm having trouble with this character. Is he supposed to have some kind of neurological impairment, like *Rain Man* or *The Awakening*? I mean, what the hell am I doing here?

Why it's in the Top 10: the opening five minutes alone are enough to make this episode top-10 worthy. Homer's prize for winning the employee raffle is to be an industrial chimney sweep - then we cut to Homer, wrapped up like a pipe cleaner, being dipped down chimneys with a crane. The silly idea of Mr. Burns watching this scene on TV while in the bathtub is funny enough, but when Smithers nearly drowns him by placing a sponge on his head, it's side-splitting. In addition to its high laughs-per-minute rate, this episode is kind of sweet. Sure, it's predictable that Bart chooses not to fire Homer in the end, but it's still cute to see him lovingly reunited with his family. I also just really like Hans Moleman.

#### 6. Flaming Moe's (Season 3)

**Synopsis:** When Moe runs into financial trouble, Homer shares a delicious secret recipe with him. Moe steals Homer's recipe, renaming it the *Flaming Moe*, and his tavern quickly becomes a trendy hangout. Wealthy restaurant owners, witnessing the wild popularity of the drink, offer Moe a million dollars to find out the secret ingredient. Right before the business deal is complete, Homer gets his revenge by revealing that the secret ingredient is cough syrup. Soon everyone in town serves their own version of the Flaming Moe, and business returns to its usual slow pace at Moe's Tavern.

**Moe:** He may have come up with the recipe, but I came up with the idea of charging \$6.95 for it.

**Homer:** Oh, look at me! I'm making people happy! I'm the Magical Man, from Happy Land, in a gumdrop house on Lollipop Lazzane! (leaves the room, then pokes his head back in) Oh, by the way, I was being sarcastic.

Why it's in the Top 10: like the Monorail episode, Flaming Moe's has a classic *Cheers*-inspired theme song, with lyrics such as *Liquor in a mug can warm you like a hug* and *Happiness is just a Flaming Moe away*. The episode's ending, where Moe forgives Homer for losing him a million dollars, is admittedly syrupy - but hey, so is the drink.

#### 5. The Last Temptation of Homer (Season 5)

**Synopsis:** To meet the Department of Labor's standards, Mr. Burns must hire a female employee at the power plant. In comes Mindy Simmons, a beautiful redheaded engineer, who Homer quickly discovers has the exact same personality as he does. Homer knocks himself out while worrying about his attraction to Mindy, and a guardian angel in the guise of Colonel Klink from a

Takoma Records, James Blackshaw can be loosely placed in that category. What sets Blackshaw apart from your average 12-string, open-tuning finger-picker and more in line with the legacies of Fahey and Basho, is twofold. First, Blackshaw is not reluctant to engage in the avant-garde, both appended onto (*Stained Glass Windows*) and integrated into (*Cloud Collapse*) his guitar pieces. More importantly, though, is the second and most immediate apparent in *The Cloud of Unknowing*: Blackshaw's songwriting has become extremely strong and affecting. Fahey's work, as formally revelatory as it could be, continues to inspire primarily for this reason, and with the *Cloud of Unknowing*, Blackshaw has finally delivered as devastating a collection of songs. Apart from the dynamic trading between shimmer and twang, there is considerable drama within each of these pieces, though none more so than the beautiful title track, one of the very best tracks recorded this year.



Burial  
*Untrue*  
[Hyperdub]

**Burial**, the dubstep architect of one of last year's very best albums, faced seemingly impossible odds with this year's follow-up. While, admittedly, *Untrue* did not assuage any fears on the first few listens, it's an album where increased ambition has it reveal itself more slowly than its predecessor. While *Burial* continues to document through hazy and shaky field recordings the nature of urban living, *Untrue* is constructed with a broader palette. The range of atmosphere may be just as wide, but there are increased angles of investigation that are employed: the album's entire first half grows as progressively dark as the second and sheds light. Fittingly, the most talked about advancement with this album is the emphatic manipulation of vocal samples, themselves far more present than ever before. Apart from engaging in so many *voices*, *Burial*'s edits and filters place their meaning in constant flux even as they inherently repeat the same words. This is most apparent in the appropriately lauded *Archangel*, although the interplay between the vocal sample and the changing mood of the music in *Untrue* is one of the most continually rewarding moments on the album. Within the diverse and increasingly populated dubstep universe, it is a testament to the talents of *Burial* that he is able to maintain such a unique voice while invigorating and expanding its application to the degree experienced with

*Hogan's Heroes* » takes him on a journey to see what his life would have been like if he hadn't married Marge. It turns out Homer and Mindy would be living a happily luxurious lifestyle, and Marge would be the president. Homer wakes up more confused than before. Then, Mr. Burns chooses Homer and Mindy to represent the plant at a nuclear convention. Back at the hotel, Mindy declares her feelings for Homer. Though tempted, Homer declares his faithfulness to Marge. Meanwhile, in the episode's subplot, Bart becomes a nerd.

(as Homer daydreams about Mindy in a Botticelli painting) Lenny: Homer, what's the matter?  
Carl: Ain't you never seen a naked chick riding a clam before?

Homer (singing): Oh Margie, you came and you found me a turkey... on my vacation away from worky.

Why it's in the Top 10: this episode humorously handles the serious topic of marital fidelity without trivializing it. In the end, it's a nice reminder of how two very different characters like Homer and Marge can work so well together. It reaffirms Homer's essential goodness - a nice reminder when he so often acts boorishly. Of course, the Homer and Mindy interactions aren't the only great part of this episode. Mr. Burns also provides plenty of laughs, for instance, by employing a duck named Stuart at his powerplant, and sending his flying monkeys to attack Homer and Mindy when they order room service. The Bart subplot gives us a hilarious glimpse at the secret world of Springfield Elementary's nerd clique. And of course, the Colonel Klink bit just cements the episode's greatness.

#### 4. Sideshow Bob Roberts (Season 6)

Synopsis: Sideshow Bob calls right-wing radio host Birchibald T. Barlow and complains of his unfair imprisonment. Barlow uses his influence to convince all of Springfield that Bob should be released, and Mayor Quimby gives into their demands. When he gets out of prison, Bob announces his candidacy for Mayor of Springfield, with promises such as the construction of a *« Mailbox Expressway »*. Lisa and Bart campaign for Quimby, but Bob ends up winning 100% to 1%, with a 1% margin of error. Bart and Lisa suspect that the election was rigged, and Smithers helps to lead them to the answer: most of Bob's « voters » are dead and buried in the Springfield cemetery. Bart and Lisa trick Sideshow Bob into confessing; Quimby gets his job back, and Bob goes back to prison.

Bart: Oh no! The dead have risen, and they're voting Republican!

Barlow: ...the illiterate, tax-cheating, wife-swapping, pot-smoking spendocrat, Diamond Joe Quimby.  
Quimby: Hey, I am no longer illiterate!

Homer (looking at ballot): Hmm, I don't agree with his Bart-killing policy... but I DO agree with his Selma-killing policy.

Why it's in the Top 10: this episode aired around election time, and many Republican viewers took offense to it. Apparently they didn't have a sense of humor to appreciate the rich political parody, like the spot-on Rush Limbaugh impersonation in Barlow. But even the politically uninformed can appreciate Bob's campaign ad (*« Mayor Quimby supports revolving door prisons. Mayor Quimby even released Sideshow Bob, a man twice convicted of attempted murder. Can you trust a man like Mayor Quimby? Vote Sideshow Bob »*). Another layer of humor

comes from the fact that *« The Simpsons »* airs on FOX, known for its conservative standpoint. Most of all, it's entertaining to watch *« The Simpsons »* take on dirty politics, and the way that politicians use meaningless tricks and empty promises to win over the voters.

#### 3. Homer and Apu (Season 5)

Synopsis: Homer eats expired ham from the Kwik-E-Mart and gets sick. When he sees the TV show *« Bite Back with Kent Brockman »*, Lisa suggests that he go on the show to investigate the Kwik-E-Mart. The producers give Homer an oversized hat with a camera inside, and they catch Apu selling hotdogs that have rolled across the floor. Apu gets fired, and his replacement is James Woods, who is researching for a movie role as a convenience store clerk. As penance for selling Homer expired food, Apu comes to live with the Simpsons and do chores for them. The family likes Apu, but Apu misses his old job. He and Homer take a journey to the Kwik-E-Mart head office in India, where Homer screws up Apu's chances of getting his job back. When Apu goes to get a box of cereal from the Kwik-E-Mart, an attempted robbery occurs. Apu saves James Woods by taking the bullet himself, and James Woods gives him his job back as thanks.

Homer: He lied to us through song! I hate when people do that!

Apu (pointing to top of a mountain): There she is, the world's first convenience store.

Homer: This isn't very convenient.

Apu: Must you dump on everything we do?

Marge: Wanna come with me to the Kwik-E-Mart?  
Apu: Mrs. Homer, I cannot go back there. That is the scene of my spiritual depantsing. "

Why it's in the Top 10: this episode rolls from one outrageous gag to the next while still adhering to a solid plotline. The guest appearance by James Woods is definitely one of the best in Simpsons history, and Apu's *« Who Needs the Kwik-E-Mart »* song strikes just the right chord.

#### 2. Homer Goes to College (Season 5)

Synopsis: The Nuclear Regulatory Commission discovers that Homer Simpson is dangerously underqualified for his job. Burns sends Homer to college to get a degree in nuclear physics. Homer enters college expecting it to be like a teen comedy. When he's doing poorly in his classes, the dean hires him three nerdy tutors. Instead of trying to learn from them, he decides to teach them how to party and play pranks, such as kidnapping the pig mascot of their rival university. The nerds get expelled for the prank, and Homer invites them to live at his house out of guilt (much to Marge's chagrin). To help them get back into college, Homer devises a prank in which the nerds will see the dean from being hit by Homer's car. But when the prank goes awry, the dean ends up in the hospital and Homer confesses that everything was his fault. The dean lets the nerds back in and doesn't punish Homer, but Homer still has to take the final exam. He fails it, but his nerd friends hack into the college's computer system and give him an A so he can keep his job.

Character on *School for Hard Knockers*: Your bra bomb better work, nerdlinger!

Homer: I am so smart, I am so smart, S-M-R-T, I mean S-M-A-R-T...

Untrue.



John Butcher  
*The Geometry Of Sentiment*  
[Emanem]

Recorded between 2004 and 2006, *The Geometry of Sentiment* is exactly the kind of rich, studied and varied saxophone work we've come to expect from Mr. Butcher. The first two tracks are a return to the Japanese Oya Stone Museum where the first half of 2002's *Cavern With Nightlife* was recorded. As with that recording, Butcher applies the location's natural resonances in a study of echoes that allows him to accompany himself without the aid of electronics. The emphasis on space is underscored in the concluding track, where Butcher applies the same concept, though this time in a German gasometer. Like with any collaboration, Butcher's approach changes to interact with the new sonic properties, resulting in a quite different, though equally intriguing performance. Butcher has always been mindful of acoustics, but here the effect is probably most immediately or accessibly apparent. The sophistication of the playing techniques gives the release the depth characteristic of Butcher's work, but there's an excitement and intensity here that make it that much more appealing.



Chris Corsano & Mick Flower Duo  
*The Radiant Mirror*  
[Textile]

To choose only one Corsano-related release from a single year is a difficult task. Working with so many varying artists, it's to Corsano's credit that the quality is always so high for each of his collaborations. While his work with Paul Flaherty may mistakenly associate his name only with jazz, Corsano's preference for the more general free improvisation tag helps explain what *The Radiant Mirror* certainly displays: he is an adept player in no single genre. Having previously played with Flower's excellent Vibracathedral Orchestra, this duet was well anticipated. That being said it is Flower's shahi bajra (a Japanese electric dulcimer/auto-harp) that is at the fore in this release's surging psychedelica. Due to the nature of the instrumentation, the two can take turns providing the propulsive drive and eclectic flourishes. Despite the titles (*« Earth »*, *« Wind »* and, you guessed it, *« Fire »*), the three works are predominantly variations on the same intense theme. Flower



Dean: Hel-lo, that sounds like a pig fainting!

Homer: Did you get a load of that nerd?

Student: Pardon me?

Why it's in the Top 10: Like « *Marge vs. the Monorail* », this episode was written by the ingenious Conan O'Brien. Homer's complete ineptitude at work, his preconceived notions of college, and his idea of a good prank are some of the highlights of the episode. Also, who doesn't love the brief and random Richard Nixon appearance as the most powerful of Sir Oinksalot's many powerful friends? It's pure hilarity.

#### 1. Homer Badman (Season 6)

Synopsis: Homer and Marge go to a candy convention and leave the kids with a new babysitter, feminist grad student Ashley Grant. At the convention, Homer steals a rare piece of candy called the « *Gummy Venus de Milo* » and narrowly escapes with it. When he gets home, he can't find the prized gummy. Marge makes him give up and drive the babysitter home. When she stands up to leave the car, Homer sees that the gummy is stuck to the seat of her jeans, and grabs it. Ashley, not realizing Homer's motives, believes that he has just sexually harassed her. A feminist mob collects around the Simpson house demanding justice. Homer thinks he can clear his name by appearing on the TV show « *Rock Bottom* », but instead it makes him out to be a violent sexual pervert. The media surrounds the Simpson household making speculative reports about Homer's activities. Homer tries to clear his name on public access television, but nobody watches his « *Innocence Report* ». Eventually, Groundskeeper Willie shows up at the Simpsons' house and reveals that he has Homer's alleged harassment on videotape. When it becomes clear that Homer was interested in the gummy and not the babysitter, his name is cleared.

Homer: Oh God, help me... Help me God! (Phone rings; Homer answers.) Yello?

Voice: Hello, Homer? This is God...froy Jones, of the TV magazine show « *Rock Bottom* ».

News man: Simpson scandal update: Homer sleeps nude in an oxygen tank that he believes gives him sexual powers! Homer: Hey, that's a half-truth. (Homer changes channels to Sally Jesse Raphael)

Woman: (crying) I don't know Homer Simpson - I've never met Homer Simpson or had any contact with him - but - (sobs uncontrollably) I'm sorry, I can't go on.

Sally: It's okay. Your tears say more than real evidence ever could.

Dennis Franz (as Homer Simpson in Homer S. Portrait of an Ass Grabber): Time to grab me some sweeties.

Why it's #1: Ah, the cream of the crop. No matter how many times I see this episode, it never gets old. The idea of a candy convention is funny enough, but the part where Homer escapes with the Gummy Venus de Milo using a can of Coke and Poprox as a bomb, in an explosive scene parodying movies like *Die Hard*, almost makes me cry with laughter. The portrayal of the media circus stationed outside the Simpson household, with their wildly untrue speculations about what's going on inside, is an incisive satire of modern news. Another great scene is the part when Homer flips through TV channels, with hilarious results on every station. I also love that The Simpsons can take a touchy issue like sexual harassment and turn it into a half-hour of solid laughs without making it seem like they don't take the issue seriously. The jokes in this episode are more than consistent - they're constant. And the portrayal of the sensationalistic media is almost too close to reality. This is truly The Simpsons at its best: scathing satire, insightful social commentary, and laughs by the second. ■

### CHRISTINE CREIGHTON

## A Year for the Record Books: 2007 Will Prevail!

### Personal Favourites:

- ✿ *Eastern Promises* - An impeccably constructed piece of work.
- ✿ *Son of Rambow* - That's not a spelling mistake.
- ✿ *There Will Be Blood* - There is greed; therefore, there will be blood.
- ✿ *Control* - A portrait of Ian Curtis that tries not to idealize, but normalize.
- ✿ *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford* - See title.
- ✿ *Redacted* - An unconventional look at the war on/in Iraq.
- ✿ *Michael Clayton* - Corporate corruption done right.
- ✿ *Hot Fuzz* - Better than all the Lethal Weapons and Bad Boys combined.
- ✿ *Zodiac* - A crime thriller that's not set on violence, but pure mystery.
- ✿ *No Country for Old Men* - A strong polemic on violence and a relevant film, despite what critics (a.k.a. haters) say.
- ✿ *Before the Devil Knows You're Dead* - They don't make crime thrillers like this anymore.
- ✿ *Sterdust* - Managed to avoid being cheesy, which is saying a lot.
- ✿ *Across the Universe* - Beatles lyrics effectively mapped onto the turbulent 1970s America.
- ✿ *Into the Wild* - Nature may be liberating, but society is not as monstrous as we may think it is.
- ✿ *Penelope* - A surprisingly endearing modern-day fairytale. No, it's not *Enchanted*.

### Honourable Mentions:

*The Darjeeling Limited, Grindhouse, Sweeney Todd, Gone Baby Gone, The Kite Runner, Juno, Margot at the Wedding, The*

### Bourne Ultimatum

*4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days, Paprika, Persepolis, Once, La Vie en Rose, Lust, Caution*

### Best Performance:

- ✿ Viggo Mortensen in *Eastern Promises*
- ✿ Daniel Day Lewis in *There Will Be Blood*
- ✿ Paul Dano in *There Will Be Blood*
- ✿ Cate Blanchett in anything. I mean, *I'm Not There*
- ✿ Nicole Kidman in *Margot at the Wedding*
- ✿ Sam Riley in *Control*

### Best Ensemble:

*The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford*  
*Michael Clayton*  
*Into the Wild*  
*Redacted*

### Overrated Films:

- ✿ *I'm Not There* - What use is unconventionality when it's not compelling?
- ✿ *Ratatouille* - An amiable rat in the kitchen. What's the big deal?
- ✿ *The Judd Apatow Phenomenon* - Scandalous comedy. Nothing new.

### 2008 Forecast:

*Be Kind, Rewind, Son of Rambow, George A. Romero's Diary of the Dead, My Blue Berry Nights, Les Chansons D'amour, Mr. Lonely, Wall-E, Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull, The Dark Knight, Cassandra's Dream, Fanboys, Paranoid Park, Flight of the Red Balloon* ■

### ROLLA TAHIR

will drone at points, but it is primarily his sharp, incendiary wailing pitted against Corsano's infectious percussive blasts. The results make this one of the best, and most unlikely, rock-orientated releases of the year.



Deepchord Presents: Echospace  
*The Coldest Season*  
[Modern Love]

The most talked about aspect of *The Coldest Season*, the sum of four 12" releases re-edited and affixed with new tracks, is its origin lying entirely within analog instruments - an increasingly rare trait among modern day electronic music. Using all manners of vintage equipment, the duo of Rod Modell (Deepchord) and Steve Hitchell (Soultek) hark back to the minimal techno of mid-90s Basic Channel releases, with equal helpings of dub and whistling static to fully conjure the release's title. Expertly mixed, this release functions as a very satisfying singular work, despite its initial DJ-focused form of release. In fact, this speaks to the dual nature of the work, such as on « *Aequinoctium* » where the beats drift in and out, perpetually at odds with the rich surface layer of distortion and the cold thwack of the dub textures. This divide is commendably straddled throughout the work. The rather abstract « *Ocean of Emptiness* » is a noisily ambient, cold dub affair, recalled later in the digitized hum of « *Winter In Seney* », yet the work culminates in the outstanding « *Empyrean* », where the hiss is tempered with a the working of a phase shift, and the dub's spirit finally begins to shimmer and thaw.



Peter Evans Quartet  
Peter Evans Quartet  
[Firehouse]

This self-titled release is the first for trumpeter Peter Evans as a band leader and it delivers exactly what one would expect from the strengths of last year's solo *More Is More* and the diverse array of projects with which he's associated. Not unlike Derek Bailey's *Standards*, here

# Top Ten Films of 2008

## Which Are Highly Anticipated, but Not Necessarily by Me

**THE** best and worst films of 2007 are now behind us as a new year of filmmaking begins. The following top ten films are not necessarily the best films to look out for this 2008, but have generated the most buzz in entertainment news. Although I'll take a pass on most of these bores, there is no question that some of these ten upcoming pictures will make box office history.

### 10. *Speed Racer* (May 9th)

A live-action adaptation of the 1960's Japanese cartoon, *Speed Racer* chronicles the life of a young boy, Speed (Emile Hirsch, *Into the Wild*), who aspires to be the best racer that has ever existed. With the help of his family, his loyal girlfriend, Trixie (Christina Ricci, *Monster*) and his sophisticated car, the Mach 5, Speed must prepare to race the death-defying course that had once took his brothers life. The film also stars Oscar-winner Susan Sarandon (*Dead Man Walking*) as Speed's mom, John Goodman (*Evan Almighty*) as Pops Racer and Matthew Fox (*Lost*) as the mysterious Racer X.

Why the buzz: Directed and written by the creative duo that brought you *The Matrix*, the Wachowskis return to create a visual adventure for both children and parents. Entirely filmed indoors, *Speed Racer* promises lots of stunning effects for audiences. Fans of the show will be excited to see how the Wachowskis will manage to create a live-action adaption of the anime cartoon. Here's hoping the film's story will be as thrilling, if not more, than the conclusion of *The Matrix* trilogy.

### 9. *Sex and The City: The Movie* (May 30th)

After four years of rumors, contract negotiations and re-writes, the popular television program « *Sex and The City* » finally makes its debut onto the silver screen. Sarah Jessica Parker, Kim Cattrall, Cynthia Nixon and Kristin Davis return as the four New York's, Carrie, Samantha, Miranda and Charlotte. Set four years later, Carrie and her friends continue to be as passionate about clothes, money and men as ever. Also returning are Christopher Noth as Mr. Big, Jason Lewis as Jerry Smith and Jerrod and Mario Cantone as Antonio Marantino.

Why the buzz: After years of persuasion and badgering by fans, the original cast returns for one last time. If you are a devoted fan of the show, this is something not to be missed. With a larger budget to work with, audiences can expect to see plenty of haute couture clothing on fashionista Sarah Jessica Parker. Sadly, they appear to be as much of an eye sore as the mole on her chin. Although the conclusion to the series will most likely focus on marriage and babies, rather than the « sex » in the series title, fans will be glad to see Carrie finally get a proper fairytale ending (yawn).

### 8. *Iron Man* (May 2nd)

Based on the Marvel comic character, *Iron Man* star Robert Downey Jr. (*Zodiac*) as the wealthy industrialist Tony Stark. After being kidnapped overseas, Tony is used by terrorists to build a dangerous device that may devastate the

world. Secretly, he designs an armored suit to escape his kidnappers and to help protect the world as the *Iron Man*. The film also stars Oscar-winner Gwyneth Paltrow (*Shakespeare in Love*) as Virginia « Pepper » Potts and Oscar-nominee Terence Howard (*The Brave One*) as Lt. Colonel James Rhodes.

Why the buzz: The trailer promises plenty of action and realism thanks to director Jon Favreau who wanted to make the comic book hero as believable as possible. The best graphic and comic designers worked on putting together a realistic vision of the iron costume. According to Downey, he was required to work for eight months with motion work alone to give the *Iron Man* character realistic movements. These special effects may just prove that it is possible to have a good comic book film adaption after all (or not). At least Downey can bring some humor and real-life experience to the role of the alcoholic playboy.

### 7. *Wanted* (June 27th)

Based on the graphic novel by Mark Millar, *Wanted* follows a young man named Wes (James McAvoy, *Atonement*) who discovers his estranged father is an assassin. After learning of his father's murder, Wes is inducted into his dad's organization by a mysterious woman named Fox (Angelina Jolie, *Tomb Raider*) and is trained by a skilled man called Sloan (Morgan Freeman, *Million Dollar Baby*). Wes quickly discovers the dangers within the secret society and must decide his future before it is too late.

Why the buzz: Angelina Jolie. Despite looking anorexic in most of the film's screen shots, Angelina takes on a whole new role...sort of. The trailer, however, looks promising as it is packed with elaborate car chases and action fights that scream *The Matrix*. Also look out for James McAvoy, whose resume includes notable performances in *The Last King of Scotland* and *Atonement*. Did I also mention it stars Angelina?

Evans employs snatches of classic melodies within an avant-garde presentation. The canonical starting points are compounded by the alternation between improvisational and notated passages, but this is only one layer of fracture, which extends to the format itself: two tracks are under a minute in length, and their inclusion in the tracklist has its basis in Eisenstein's conflict editing more than anything else, providing a sharp contrast in style, production and form (without intro or conclusion) from the tracks before and after. Certainly, the album is rife with a variety of styles, best encapsulated in Evans wonderful performance, but equally noticeable through the lens of Seabrook's guitar, which goes as far as blunt noise on the appropriately named leading track, « !!!!! ». Evans writes, « *My goal is that the familiar elements are constantly coming in and out of focus, creating loaded, pressurized music* ». That a piece named « *Frank Sinatra* » may be adequately described both by this goal and its own name testifies to how well Evans has executed this ambitious project.



Radu Malfatti  
*Rain Speak Soft Tree Listens*  
[b-boim]

My first acquaintance with the work of Austrian composer Radu Malfatti was due to the commendation of his use of judiciously arranged periods of silence, each integrated within his works at precise moments and lengths. Years later, this remains a vitally intriguing facet of Malfatti's work, as evidenced in *Rain Speak Soft Tree Listens*, one of twelve CD-R's self-released in this past year. The silences both emphasize and relieve the tensions engendered by the solitary piano notes, whispered words and droning strings, with the employment of each waxing, waning and overlap-



### 6. *Valkyrie* (October 3rd)

Directed by Bryan Singer (*The Usual Suspects*), *Valkyrie* is a historical thriller based on real life events that took place during World War II Germany. Tom Cruise stars as Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg, the leader of the July 20 Plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler. After being wounded in Africa, Stauffenberg returns to Nazi Germany where he helps develop Operation Valkyrie, a plan to manage the turmoil within his home country. He eventually joins the German Resistance and becomes the leader in a wild task to put a stop to his dictator. Kenneth Branagh (*Sleuth*) and Bill Nighy (*Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End*) also star.

Why the buzz: The production of *Valkyrie* has not been easy for Tom Cruise. Due to his beliefs in Scientology, German authorities would not allow the production of the film to be done in Germany. Eventually, the film was allowed to be shot at historical monuments that pertained to the story. To top things off, parts of the film's footage were ruined and permission had to be sought in order to re-shoot its scenes. With all this bad luck, will Tom Cruise's fake German accent and creepy eye patch still save this film from failure? I won't be betting on it, but you can still check it out for Tom's weird haircut and its Nazi killing.

### 5. *The X-Files 2* (July 25th)

Ten years after their first film release, Mulder and Scully are back to investigate the strange and unusual in this movie sequel. Although little has been said about the film's plot, David Duchovny reveals that the story will be very much a supernatural thriller focusing on his character, Fox Mulder, and his relationship with Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson). Joining the original twosome are new faces Amanda Peet (*The Whole Nine Yards*), Billy Connolly (*Fido*) and Xabier (*Drailed*).

Why the buzz: If you are a devoted fan of the once popular television show, this will most likely excite your knickers. However, high expectations for the long awaited sequel may predetermine this film's failure. With the first film of the series garnering mixed reviews, will its sequel be as unsuccessful, if not more, than its predecessor? Let's just hope this time around the aliens are a bit scarier than *E.T.*

### 4. *Bond 22* (November 7th)

Daniel Craig returns as the dashing womanizer and special agent James Bond in the twenty-second film of the franchise. No word on what Bond will encounter this time but the premise will most likely include exotic car chases, explosions and skimpy girls. Recently-east as the film's Bond girls, newcomers Gemma Arterton and Olga Kurylenko will continue the hot tradition and join Judi Dench as M in this new adventure.

Why the buzz: After the success of *Casino Royale*, audiences have quickly accepted the blond Daniel Craig as the new Bond and are interested to see what he will bring next to the Bond franchise. The Bond films have always been entertaining no matter how absurd the plots have been, so this sequel will most likely be a success. Rumors also have it that a bigger glimpse into Bond's darker persona will be explored (for real this time), and hopefully there will be less of the « *lovey dovey* » sap.

### 3. *The Dark Knight* (July 18th)

Christian Bale returns to the role of Bruce Wayne in this highly-anticipated sequel to *Batman*

Begins. In this chapter of the franchise, the Caped Crusader finds himself battling a psychopath by the name of Joker (Heath Ledger, *Brokeback Mountain*). With the help of old friends Lt. Gordon (Gary Oldman, *Moulin Rouge*), Alfred (Michael Caine, *The Prestige*), Lucius Fox (Morgan Freeman, *Million Dollar Baby*) and new ally Harvey Dent (Aaron Eckhart, *Thank You for Smoking*), Batman will stop at nothing to rid Gotham city of its new menace. Maggie Gyllenhaal (*Stranger than Fiction*) also stars.

Why the buzz: The sequel promises to be more thrilling than its predecessor as the classic villain, The Joker, returns to the screen for the first time since Jack Nicholson's portrayal. Heath Ledger puts on the smile this time around and, gathering from the trailer, does a pretty good job at it. At least the cast's acting credibility won't suffer with Katie Holmes out of the picture.

### 2. *Star Trek 11* (December 25th)

The television series *Star Trek* returns with new director, J.J. Abrams (*Lost*) revitalizing the popular franchise through this long awaited installment. Although plot details have been kept under wraps, it has been said this new chapter will chronicle the early years of Captain James T. Kirk and his USS Enterprise crew.

Why the buzz: Word of a new *Star Trek* film has had all sci-fi geeks in an uproar of excitement, as well as, contemplation over the new cast. Those confirmed to join the remake include Zachary Quinto (*Heroes*), Eric Bana (*The Hulk*), Winona Ryder (*Girl Interrupted*) and Simon Pegg (*Hot Fuzz*). However, fans question whether the film will remain faithful to the sci-fi series and if newcomer Chris Pine will ably fill William Shatner's shoes as the young Kirk. But if you don't care if Winona shoplifts Spock's ears, then maybe this film stands a chance after all.

### 1. *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* (May 22nd)

The most anticipated film of 2008 is the return of beloved character Indiana Jones in this fourth film of the series. Steven Spielberg directs Harrison Ford as Indie, along with Karen Allen (*Raiders of the Lost Ark*), Cate Blanchett (*Elizabeth: The Golden Age*) and Shia LaBeouf (*Transformers*) in this new adventure. Set in 1957, Indiana Jones finds himself battling agents of the Soviet Union for the crystal skull.

Why the buzz: Almost twenty years since the first film, Harrison Ford return as the wise cracking archeologist Indiana Jones have brought both excitement and wonder to fans as many await to see if the now 65 year-old can revive the memorable role. Despite problems with set extras leaking plot details, the fourth installment is still shrouded in mystery. Ford may not look as handsome as he once did, but I'm betting he can still pull off a few more bruises than usual. This is one film I'll actually be seeing. ■

MELISSA  
LASZKIEWICZ

ping throughout the hour long piece in an extremely haunting fashion. By far one of the most powerful releases of the year, a true experience with every listen.



Keith Rowe  
*The Room*  
[Erstwhile]

The history of Keith Rowe, as both a member of AMM and for his potent collaborations, seems to come to a head in *The Room*. This is not to say that Rowe is at all regurgitating, an absurd assumption for someone so engrained in unconventionality and improvisation, but rather that *The Room* is necessitated by a lifetime of experience. Several of Rowe's signature sounds contribute to engendering exactly this feeling in the listener's mind. Yet, with the opening swell of sound, there is immediately a strong feeling of darkness - even terror - that confirms any suspicions one might have had at the Rothko-esque album artwork (Rothko, whom Rowe has been a vocal supporter of, committed suicide in 1970). These two points become more obvious in the progressive layering, rich in both formal intrigue and devastating emotional affect. For the latter reason, it's difficult, even after extensive listens, to adequately enunciate the experience of *The Room*. Like a painting, this work stands, in its one track, personally and nakedly. As a statement in EAJ, *The Room* is one of the strongest I've heard, and the best piece of music released in 2007.



UGK  
*Underground Kingz*  
[Jive]

This long-awaited release from UGK would be cast with a dramatic light even were it not for Pimp C's unfortunate death this past December. While not without recent lackluster efforts himself, Pimp C's admonishment of the path of mediocrity the South was beaded down prior to the release of this album only served to amplify already lofty expectations: as forefathers of rap in Houston and the South in general, this would be the first UGK album since the South started dominating the charts. It's fitting that in this, the best rap release of the year, Pimp C and Bun B not only emphasize their legacy, but also integrate within their signature sound an a-list of guests, Southern and otherwise. Three 6 Mafia, OutKast, Big Daddy Kane, Too \$hort and even Dizzee



## Five Exceptional Fantasy Films

**BEFORE** the list, a few words on the reasoning behind its selections:

This list is not meant to definitively order THE five greatest fantasy films ever made, but to merely provide five works of stand-out quality and uniqueness from the genre. As one may notice, these films are all actually of a specific sort of fantasy: the fairy tale. This was an intentional move meant to tap fantasy cinema in its purest form. While über-popular literary adaptations such as *The Lord of the Rings*, *Harry Potter*, *The Chronicles of Narnia* and, most recently, *The Golden Compass* are fine products of the genre, I sought to gather films that are freer and more stripped down in terms of their story elements. I wasn't looking for films that came adorned with too many political intricacies, rules and institutions, therefore those containing Ministries of Magic, elven councils and Magistériums need not apply. I also wanted to avoid films that swell to epic proportions towards the end; the kinds that always inevitably culminate in a massive final battle filled with charging armies, swinging swords and all manners of mayhem. Captivating as these sequences may be, they can also leave the viewer feeling drained and crushed by the all-important significance of whatever magical conflict is being portrayed. Also exempt were films with star-studded casts, simply due to the aura of celebrity that can disrupt the illusions they work so hard to create (« *Is that Robert De Niro dressed as a pirate?* »). For a genre with such imaginative possibilities, these films should be memorable for more than whoever got top billing. Finally, none of that *Conan the Barbarian*, *Drizzt-the-dark-elf*, swords-and-sorcery stuff will be found here either – these

are relatable parables, not cinematic *Dungeons and Dragons* tournaments. All the films listed here have one foot planted firmly in our world, allowing for easy savoring and digestion of their moral-laden tales. It is no coincidence that all but one of them use children as their main protagonists, thus benefiting from the beautifully simple viewpoint of the young and innocent. This air of simplicity is the key feature that unites these films, allowing their viewers, no matter how old, to experience the pure wonderment that fantasy in general was made for.

1. *Pan's Labyrinth*  
(Guillermo Del Toro, Mexico/Spain, 2006)

It's true – all the hype is justified; all the adoration deserved: *Pan's Labyrinth* is as good as fantasy cinema gets. This tale of a girl named Ofelia who encounters a faun, fairies and other magical beings in 1944 Spain is vividly realized with a master storyteller's delicate care and a master filmmaker's eye for detail. The film's stunning visual style constructs an immersive green-hued world punctuated with icy blues and violent splashes of red and orange. In an inspired deployment of narrative strategy, De Toro quite straight-forwardly examines how real events help shape worlds of fantasy by making symbolic parallels between his young heroine's magical exploits and the brutal reality of the Spanish Civil War (recalling C.S. Lewis's Christian allegory and J.R.R. Tolkien and Philip Pullman's fantastical re-imaginings of World War I elements). Here, the wicked stepfather figure is embodied by the despicable Captain Vidal of the

Rascal are only a few of who show up to lend a hand, UGK often deftly trading in these artists' different styles. Alongside this, all the hitherto pent up (literally, in Pimp C's case) womb of UGK results in a rare double CD where there's no real slack. Finally hearing Bun B, coming off an endless supply of excellent guest appearances, once again paired with Pimp C is the real draw, though. « *Int'l Players Anthem* », easily the best track of the year, is still at its best when Bun B is on the mic, while « *Quit Hatin' the South* » and « *How Long Can It Last* » remind just how good the two are together – as ambassadors of and advisors for the entire Southern style. Though it will be dramatized as a final word, this is an album that simply continues the high calibre of talent that UGK had delivered throughout their career.



Ricardo Villalobos  
fabric 36  
[Fabric]

It's becoming increasingly hard for Ricardo Villalobos to take a wrong step. A king in the minimal techno world, his name is almost always dropped alongside a mention of the marathon DJ sessions he routinely



fascist forces and Ofelia confronts the demons of war and oppression as well as the ones that haunt her imagination. That these adult concepts and a little girl's coming-of-age process can be portrayed in unison and with such consistent fluidity and seductive beauty finalizes *Pan's Labyrinth*'s status as a perfect, polished jewel in the genre's crown.

2. *Fanny and Alexander*  
(Ingmar Bergman, Sweden, 1982)

While it might be a stretch to classify this film as pure fantasy, it nevertheless strongly bears many qualities found in classic fairy tale literature. Ingmar Bergman wasn't known for making overt ventures into the genre, though he would often use fantastic elements to accentuate his serious studies of the human spirit. Certainly the most splendid example of this method, *Fanny and Alexander* is one of his most accessible and enjoyable works. The titular brother and sister can easily be seen as a Swedish Hansel and Gretel who undergo a journey of hardships from under the loving wing of the Ekdahl family to the frigid tyranny of their own wicked stepfather, Bishop Vergerus. The entire narration is laced with an unparalleled richness, and while magic is very much present throughout, it is used with a great degree of gentleness and subtlety, allowing ghosts and other supernatural phenomena to inhabit the film in a seamless fashion. Bergman's marriage of storybook simplicity with his magician's mastery over the craft brings together warm affection, joyous humor, heartbreak tragedy, harsh cruelty and wondrous awe into a magnificent tapestry of cinematic excellence.

Note: for those trying to decide between seeing the three-hour theatrical cut and the five-hour director's cut, I'd highly recommend the latter if only to get the full effect of Bergman's intended swan song (and in this age when entire TV show seasons are consumed all too quickly on DVD, you can easily make time for it over a few evenings – especially considering it was originally shown in four episodes on Swedish television).

3. *Alice*  
(Jan Svankmajer, Czechoslovakia, 1988)

Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* remains to this day one of the key archetypal works of fantasy literature. By now, almost everyone is familiar with the classic tale of a young girl and her journey through a parallel realm where madness governs all. Its influence can easily be seen in most of the films listed here (and countless others), from basic story elements (child protagonists, encounters with magical beings, the formers' subjection to both magic and cruelty) to sly homages (In *Pan's Labyrinth*, Ofelia at one point dons a familiar dress – but hers is green instead of blue, in keeping with the film's color scheme). Those looking for an imaginative take on the original story should be quite satisfied with *Alice*, the first feature-length film by the Czech animation master Jan Svankmajer. If Carroll's story wasn't disturbing enough (you have to admit that it's pretty dark for a children's book), Svankmajer adds a sense of all-out menace through his trademark stop motion techniques. In keeping with his usual visual style, everything in the film has an old, worn quality to it, and his *Wonderland* takes much of its form in forgotten

attics, basements and store rooms. Here, the white rabbit is a taxidermy project come to life with sawdust innards and wide, beady eyes, the Mad Hatter is a carved wooden marionette and Alice transforms into a tiny porcelain doll via the usual tarts and mushrooms. Apart from a sparse narration by Alice, the film has no dialogue, allowing the macabre imagery and eye-popping animation to take center stage in this entertaining display of cinematic trickery.

4. *Beauty and the Beast*  
(Jean Cocteau, France, 1946)

Madame Leprince de Beaumont's classic fairy tale has never received a treatment as lavish as this, Jean Cocteau's first work since the 1930 trancel film *La Tragédie du Poète*. From beginning to end, Cocteau pulls all the stops in creating a visual feast for his audience. Filled with sumptuous costumes and sets, his film uses a wide array of cinematic techniques (such as slow motion, creative lighting, elaborate makeup and shots run in reverse) to craft its illusion of enchantment. As its prelude eloquently beseeches, this film allows adults to once more savor the simple delights that children's fables can provide. However, Cocteau added an admirable twist at the end by giving the Prince a bland appearance that leaves the heroine Belle somewhat disappointed with her conventional storybook fate and the viewer yearning with her for the Beast who had commanded such a captivating performance prior to his transformation. With this little change, the film imparts a clever moral concerning the many ways character can be read.

5. *Spirited Away*  
(Hayao Miyazaki, Japan, 2001)

From the immense treasure trove of animated works that Japan has to offer, a name worth remembering (and no doubt heard most often) is Hayao Miyazaki. His filmography alone could easily provide a substantial list of quality fantasy films (*Castles in the Sky*, *Kiki's Delivery Service*, *Princess Mononoke*, *Hou's Moving Castle*), but the single best fit here is the 2003 Oscar winner for Best Animated Film, *Spirited Away*. It is yet another echo of Carroll's *Alice*, yet one reinvented by Miyazaki's wild imagination. Depicting a feisty girl's adventures in a realm inhabited by spirits (which contains a roarous, multi-storey bathhouse dedicated to the refreshment of weary gods), the film's anime look lends a high degree of detail and visual stimulation that sets it worlds apart from the comparatively humdrum route of live-action. The girl's exploits introduce her to a number of memorable characters including a whisky, multi-limbed labor master, a wrinkled sorceress who steals people's names, a helpful boy who transforms into a wolf-like dragon and a mysterious masked specter who ominously follows the heroine throughout the film. Encountering these strange beings is delightful in itself, yet never before has a film's world been as immersive and fascinating through its details, as every scene yields new surprises to discover and enjoy. If there ever was a case for the potential brilliance in combining animation and fantasy, it would be *Spirited Away*.

MARC  
SAINT-CYR

delivers. Apart from this, though, he routinely provides excellent original material, where numerous, and unexpected styles are integrated in bewildering fashions. That they always work out in the end is to his credit, and this release is no different. For his contribution to fabric's series of DJ mixes, Villalobos selects only his own work, although a few have collaborators, departing from what most would consider a DJ mix. The first two tracks immediately convey his stylistic breadth, employing noisy glitches and layering typical techno drums with percussive jazz flourishes. That these, and the entire set, are mixed so fluidly is compelling, as taken side by side it would be difficult to not expect chaos. This is a complete release in that best sense possible, transcending easy definitions of DJ mix through the complexity of its construction (it's even co-mixed). The majority of the set subtly builds to a *Organic Tranceplant*, where it effectively does just that: everything calmly halts. It is then that Villalobos can navigate the set to the chanting glitch-pop of the final three tracks and a very curious sonic conclusion. Even this dynamic is understated, though. Never one for formal convention, there are no great peaks and valleys of emotion here, and ultimately that is its greatest credit. With Villalobos, dance music at once accepts and rejects even its name, freeing up a number of exciting possibilities such as this.



Yellow Swans  
*At All Ends*  
[Load]

Guitar has never been absent from Yellow Swans, depending, of course, of your understanding of what a guitar represents. On *At All Ends*, though, the presence of the capital-G Guitar is somewhat revelatory. On the opening, title track, for instance, a guitar is definitely heard in the opening minutes, although in support of a churning, light, industrial howl. When the two are buried under a digitized storm, the guitar grows a bit in prominence to compete, but remains understated. At about the eight-minute mark, it moves, for all intents and purposes, to centre stage – all rock connotations intended. Apart from the brief respite of *Stretch the Sands* – respite, of course, being relative – the influence never wanes. It is fitting, then, that with *Our Oases* and *Mas Mirage*, more or less a diptych (as their names may indicate), there is a prominent doom metal sound, the realization of all guitar amplifier worship built up in the anathemic first track. Appropriately, Boris comparisons are not too far off, particularly for the beauty found throughout this album. However, just as the finale, *Endlessly Making an End of Things*, confirms this direction when its opening's minimalist squeaks become squalls, it also recognizes the fleetingness of any particular stylistic flourish within the D. Yellow Swans discography. As is the trend in noise-based outfits, for all the focus and invitingness of this Capital-A Album, it is precisely the unpredictability and unconventionality of the duo that makes the aberration, the introduction of the more conventional, that much more appealing.

CHRIS HERON

## The City

**SIX,** 27 minute films have been made by the National Film Board of Canada based on a book of Lewis Mumford entitled THE CITY IN HISTORY. Each segment is narrated by Budd Knapp with frequent interjections by Mr. Mumford.

### 1. HEAVEN AND HELL

The first short deals with the history of the city-past, present and future. The ancients conceived the city as an image of heaven, indeed a veritable heaven on earth. The origins of the city, although obscure, are based on three factors: 1) the burial ground as a focal point 2) a ritual centre, a sacred grove or a cave for religious needs 3) practical needs such as hunting and fishing brought people together. Civilization was made possible by agricultural revolutions. The earliest civilization centred in Mesopotamia. Here, the nomadic hunter was the leader. Soon the purposes of the village changed leading to the formation of the city. In the city, the leader was a king and the villagers subjects. Religion was used by the king as a means to obtain obedience, and the leader

of this group was the priest.

The city gradually expanded with rights and cults becoming outlets for anxieties. As the cults grew so the anxieties magnified leading eventually to nuclear war. Progress is marked by the technical domination of machines. There is a purposeless drive for expansion while human needs are ignored on the outskirts. The heart of the city, once a container of people is now composed of disposable containers i.e. apartments. Mr. Mumford sees uncontrolled urban expansion as devastating as nuclear war where the city will end as it began with people living in shelters.

### 2. CARS OR PEOPLE?

The second short deals with the influence of the automobile on the city. A short history of transportation is given showing how canals were soon supplanted by trains. Continuing on the theme of ruthless expansion, Mumford points out that the dirt and squalor produced by the trains, destroyed the cities' natural areas. Small towns become whistle stops and similarly, roads now bypass the cities they once served. The car has become a symbol, in our time, of status and a good inflator of our egos. Cars are greedy for space, a demand which can never be met. Los Angeles tried

remedy the situation by building a city for cars but, to its dismay, found that this was only an expensive way to commit suicide.

The Netherlands were presented as having an ideal transportation system. Railways did not supplant canals but supplemented them as cars supplemented railways. The key here is that the use of land must be intelligently planned-not haphazardly bulldozed. The consequences are great says Mumford, and if we continue to encourage this "insidious" infiltration of cars into the heart of the city, we may find that the city will exist solely for cars-not for people.

The NFB has cleverly captured Mumford's basic ideas on film. The destructive aspect of the city is magnified by a mass scene of a "ban the bomb" rally, complete with police brutality. The uninhabitability of a city dominated by cars is amusingly depicted in scenes where people are almost killed crossing the street and motorists read newspapers while caught up in the middle of a massive traffic jam. Excellent photography plus the educational nature of the subject make for a thoroughly enlightening evening.

## The Last Four Decisions I Wish I Hadn't Made

I'VE been around since 1986, as long as Oprah's daytime television ventures and as long as Ratt has been dancing under cover. There's not much in my life that I'd really regret doing either. I figure if I wanted to do it at the time, then that's more than likely just the way I am. Although I guess everyone does have a few big things that they'd at the very least like to forget ever happened. Do you recall that kid in your grade that bought every single beanie baby ever released? Have you heard Bob Dylan's latest record? Remember Rosie O'Donnell in *Riding the Bus With My Sister*? Big regrets like those are pretty crappy. However, that's not what I'm going to be talking about here. What my focus is are those daily little decisions you make that you don't necessarily regret, but they sure as hell make your day a lot less bright.

Here are five of my half-assed regrets, organized chronologically:

1. Put on a fake dragon tattoo. This may sound quite wonderful, and in fact it was at the time. I conjured up images of making this tattoo a reality, named him Billy-Joel and got a few comments about looking « *hardcore* » from innocent looking giggly girls that looked like me, but without a fake tattoo. However, as with many things in my life, I promptly tired of B.J.

I didn't plan well enough ahead and lacked removal tools. I tried water, and the result was a sticky dragon with a partial head. As my forearm eventually looked like I had a case of O.C.D, I gave myself a break. I woke up the next morning and the tattoo had duplicated itself due to stickiness on my stomach.

Three days later my forearm was fully devoured.

2. Sitting in the second to last row of my lecture today. This wasn't immediately a bad decision. I got in late so I tried to hide in the back. This decision even resulted in finally having a left handed seat. As the lecture progressed, however, I started to smell something unpleasant. Not foul per se, but definitely not nice. I tried to figure out what it was and discovered the man to my left, shoeless and loving it. What on earth makes a person think it's a good idea to remove their running shoes for a good hour during an inescapable lecture? He was even wearing a filthy pair of those terrible socks that fit your toes like gloves, so it was a visual disaster too. However, it's pretty easy to avoid looking (and clearly advisable) so all I was left with was an hour of odor.

In the future I will avoid the second last row and its tempting left handed chair in hopes that he sits there weekly.

3. Started Looking at Askmen.com list section. It seems like just another innocent website, but that's ex-

actly where its power lies. Once you start, you truly can't stop. It's like heroin for the cynical. With hints for the ladies' man like « *Never follow a woman* », and list of poems to « *drop on her* », it's clearly quite amusing. However, the time wasted on ridiculing the authors leaves me open to ridicule myself and so the decision to continue reading is what I regret.

4. Asking for a subscription to the Economist for Christmas. You see, at face value this doesn't seem like a bad decision at all. I study economics, I like economics (as much as you can, I guess) and all around, I find the magazine pretty interesting. Thus, this is a sort of « *indirect* » regret, if I may be so bold as to classify. You see, along with the subscription to the *Economist* comes « *Pocket World In Figures* ». Usually, this would be something normal people throw away. Shockingly, I ready the 250+ page book from cover to cover. Though the pages are small, it's matched by the size of the text and more sadly the amount of numbers included. For days I found myself incorporating these numbers into ever possible aspect of communication. And that is why I indirectly regret subscribing to the *Economist*. I wasted god knows how much time looking at statistics and I became purely annoying. If this isn't a symptom of attending our university I don't know what is.

MICHELLE KLOEPFER

## - ANNOUNCEMENT -

The first annual Toronto-Romanian Film Festival is running from Friday, February 1<sup>st</sup> to Sunday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> at Innis Town Hall. The late Cristian Nemeșu's *California Dreamin' (Endless)*, winner of 2007's « *Un Certain Regard* » at Cannes, will open the festival, and additional screenings include *Reenactment* (1968), *The Rest Is Silence* (2007) and the first Romanian feature film, *War of Independence* (1912). For the full program and further information, visit <http://toraartsgroup.com/events/>.